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OPENING ADDRESS
TWENTY-THIRD GRADUATE FORTNIGHT*

BENJAMIN P. WATSON

President, The New York Academy of Medicine

ON behalf of The New York Academy of Medicine I bid you welcome to its 1950 Graduate Fortnight.

The Fortnight was instituted twenty-three years ago and each year since some aspect of medical science and practice has been reviewed. I trust that this year you will find the program provided as stimulating as have been those in the past.

It takes much knowledge, thought and planning to decide on a major subject for discussion and to have it presented in its various subdivisions by those best qualified to speak. This task is undertaken by the Committee on Medical Education of the Academy acting through a small subcommittee specially selected for the purpose.

The names of the members of this subcommittee with Dr. Currier McEwen as Chairman and Dr. Mahlon Ashford as Secretary appear in your folders. I take this opportunity of conveying to them the thanks of the Academy for their work and effort. I also wish to thank all those who have so readily acceded to our invitation to take part in the program. Some of these are our own Fellows whilst others are distinguished scientists and clinicians working in medical schools and institutions situated throughout the length and breadth of the North American Continent.

* Given October 9, 1950 at The New York Academy of Medicine.

This year's program deals with diseases and disabilities affecting the Musculo-Skeletal System. Whilst most of these are not serious so far as an immediate threat to life is concerned, many of them are attended by such loss of function as to render the victim incapable of full physical activity or of earning a livelihood. With our aging population the numbers suffering from these disabilities is increasing, so placing an added strain on our whole economic system. The problem of prevention and treatment is thus not only individual but national in its implications.

The so-called rheumatic diseases alone take a heavy toll on our population. It is in the understanding and treatment of these and allied conditions that the most spectacular scientific and clinical advances have been made in recent years. You will have the opportunity in the evening lectures of hearing from those who are pioneers in this advance and have been putting scientific facts to clinical application. They will tell us where we stand at the present time and what are likely to be the developments in the future. These developments will depend upon a more complete understanding of the structure of and the physiological and pathological processes occurring in connective tissue, muscle and bone. This aspect of the problem will be dealt with by speakers who are actively engaged in its elucidation.

When irreversible changes have occurred in muscle, joint or bone the orthopedic surgeon can now step in and by many ingenious procedures improve or restore impaired or lost function. Notable advances have been made in the rehabilitation of those suffering from muscular, arthritic and skeletal disabilities. These and other subjects will be dealt with in the Morning Panel Discussions.

At the afternoon Hospital Clinics opportunity will be given to see patients suffering from the various lesions, some in the course of active treatment, some undergoing rehabilitation and others cured, improved or in statu quo.

The Scientific Exhibit on the first two floors of this building is open from 10:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Dr. Alfred Angrist and the contributors have gone to a great deal of trouble to make it of true educational value and I commend it to your attention.

Miss Doe, our Librarian, and Miss Annan have set out a collection of books, articles and atlases dealing with the conditions under discussion.

Motion picture demonstrations and televised surgical operations complete the program. We hope that you who take part in it will find it rewarding.